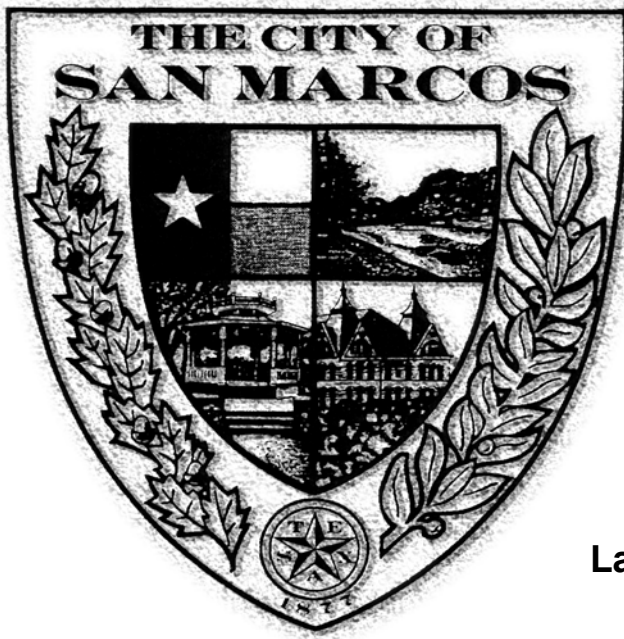


CITY OF SAN MARCOS PARKS, RECREATION and OPEN SPACE PLAN

PREPARED FOR

CITY OF SAN MARCOS

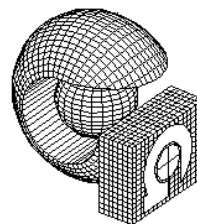


**David Chiu, Mayor
Louis Doiron, Jr., Place 1
Earl Mosley, Place 2
Jane Hughson, Place 3
Joe Cox, Jr., Place 4
Paul Mayhew, Place 5
Martha Castex Tatum, Place 6**

**Larry Gilley, City Manager
Laura Huffman, Deputy City Manager**

**Rodney Cobb, Director
Parks and Recreation Department**

PREPARED BY



**Gil Engineering
Associates, Inc.**

**506 E. Braker Lane
Austin, Texas 78753
Phone (512)835-4203
Fax (512)835-4407**

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INTRODUCTION

Parks, recreation and open space are key elements in a community's quality of life. When properly conceived designed and built, parks help ensure a wholesome environment, contribute to the economic well being of the community, impact the aesthetics of the community, and assist in the protection of special physical features and natural resources.

This Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan (Plan) is, therefore, designed to be a comprehensive, long-range plan for the development, expansion and acquisition of parks, open space, and greenspace and recreational areas within the incorporated limits of the City of San Marcos. This Plan is the result of a community effort with work having been done on the part of many. This included the gathering of information from citizen comments through the public process, city and school district personnel, and from various community organizations. Before final adoption, the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, the Planning and Zoning Commission, and the City Council of the City of San Marcos held public hearings on this plan.

This Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan is intended to guide and satisfy all of the related needs of the City of San Marcos over the next decade. The City of San Marcos will review, and update if necessary, this Plan every five years to include in its inventory those areas and/or facilities placed into use. This Plan is a component of the San Marcos Horizons, and satisfies current Texas Parks and Wildlife Department requirements for awarding grants.

To assist in its intended role as a guide, the following charts are provided to show population growth and demographic trends. U.S. Census Bureau population figures for 1970 through 2000 decades are included to demonstrate the population growth trends for the City of San Marcos and are as shown on the following table:

Year	Population
1970	18,860
1980	23,420
1990	28,743
2000	34,733

The City of San Marcos' Planning and Development Services Department has made the following population projections for the years shown:

Year	Population
<i>2005</i>	<i>44,781</i>
<i>2010</i>	<i>51,913</i>

Demographics for the City of San Marcos were obtained from the 1990 and 2000 Census of Population & Housing figures provided by the U.S. Census Bureau. Comparisons between the City of San Marcos with the Austin-San Marcos metropolitan statistical area (MSA), the state and the nation are provided in the following table:

	City of San Marcos		Austin-San Marcos MSA	Texas	United States
Age Distribution (2000):	Number	Percent			
Under 5 years	1,718	4.9%	7.4%	7.8%	6.8%
5-9 years	1,414	4.1%	7.1%	7.9%	7.3%
10-14 years	1,325	3.8%	6.8%	7.8%	7.3%
15-19 years	4,167	12.0%	7.5%	7.8%	7.2%
20-24 years	11,274	32.5%	9.9%	7.4%	6.7%
25-59 years	11,643	33.5%	51.4%	47.9%	48.4%
60+ years	3,192	9.2%	9.9%	13.3%	16.2%
Median Age (2000):	23.3	--			
Race (2000):					
White alone	25,200	72.6%	72.5%	71.0%	75.1%
Black or African American alone	1,921	5.5%	8.0%	11.5%	12.3%
American Indian/Alaska Native alone	227	0.7%	0.6%	0.6%	0.9%
Asian alone	426	1.2%	3.5%	2.7%	3.6%
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander Alone	38	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%
Some other race alone	5,914	17.0%	12.8%	11.7%	5.5%
Two or more races	1,007	2.9%	2.6%	2.5%	2.4%
Hispanic (of any race)	12,676	36.5%	26.2%	32.0%	12.5%
Household Income (1990):					
Less than \$10,000	3,672	37.5%	16.1%	17.7%	15.4%
\$10,000 to \$24,999	3,136	32.0%	28.1%	28.6%	26.4%
\$25,000 to \$49,999	2,190	22.3%	33.0%	32.3%	33.7%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	549	5.6%	14.1%	13.3%	15.0%
\$75,000 or greater	257	2.6%	8.7%	8.0%	9.5%
Median Household Income (1990):	\$14,816	--	\$28,474	\$27,016	\$30,056

Source: 1990 & 2000 Census of Population & Housing, U.S. Census Bureau

Note: Not all census figures have been released for the 2000 census, including household data

PLAN DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

A successful Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan is one that provides for all or most of the varied interests of all types of age groups. The San Marcos Horizons' "San Marcos Tomorrow" section identified several goals in its Community Facilities Plan. Some of these have already been incorporated into the parks and recreation system or have been added as a part of this Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan. These facilities include the Activity Center, a Cultural Arts Center, small neighborhood recreation centers, regional swimming pool(s), and neighborhood swimming pools.

In their final report, the Mayor's Blue Ribbon Committee on Tourism Development recognized the importance of the parks, particularly the River Corridor park system, for tourism. The Committee developed recommendations about the parks and these are included in this Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan. The recommendations are as follows:

1. Improve riverbanks and river parkland through further development of the river park trail system, bank erosion control and improved landscaping and weed control in line with the proposed City Park renovations recommended by the Parks and Recreation Department.
2. Link the downtown and San Marcos River through landscaping.
3. Increase cleanliness and beauty of the river through frequent trash cleanups of the river (organized underwater trash cleanups).
4. Create a veterans' park at the airport through the renovation of World War II era buildings and the original control tower and landscaping of the site.

5. Develop a San Marcos Plaza in commemoration of St. Mark and the discovery of the (San Marcos) rivers' headwaters.

As stated earlier, public participation has been a key element in the preparation of this Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan. The comments given at each of five Public Hearings to "Solicit Citizen Input" were incorporated into this Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan. All five Public Hearings were properly and separately advertised in the San Marcos Daily Record. All public hearings were held from 7:00 to 9:00 PM. The dates and locations (with the number of people providing comments) are as follows:

January 20, 1998	San Marcos CISD District Office	13 people
February 2, 1998	Crockett Elementary School	12 people
March 30, 1999	Sunrise Village Community Hall	17 people
April 20, 1998	Dunbar Community Center	8 people
May 19, 1998	San Marcos Activity Center	15 people

In 1999 the Greenspace Planning Committee was organized to directly assist the Plan effort in identifying available greenspace within the corporate limits of the City of San Marcos. The Greenspace Planning Committee includes the Deputy City Manager, the Directors and staff from the City Planning Department and the Parks and Recreation Department, staff from the U.S. National Park Service, representatives from the Trust for Public Lands, the Nature Conservancy, the San Marcos Greenbelt Alliance, the San Marcos River Foundation and other interested community leaders. A very thorough

“Greenspace Acquisition Criteria” was conceived to identify, select and eventually purchase additional greenspace. Even though Identification of parcels of land for eventual purchase can be counterproductive for various reasons, the “Greenspace Acquisition Criteria” is a valuable resource tool and has been included in the Standards and Inventory of Areas/Facilities section of this Plan.

In addition to the five Public Hearings and the Greenspace Committee meetings, input for this document came from various other sources including the City of San Marcos Planning and Development staff, the City of San Marcos Public Works staff, and the San Marcos Consolidated Independent School District staff. Recommendations were also received from the Development Ordinance Review Task Force and numerous other community organizations such as the Heritage Association, the San Marcos River Foundation, the Greenbelt Alliance, the Mayor’s Blue Ribbon Committee on Tourism Development and the San Marcos Area Arts Council.

To complete the process before being accepted for final adoption, workshops and public hearings were conducted by the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, the Planning and Zoning Commission and the San Marcos City Council.

PARK CLASSIFICATIONS, STANDARDS and INVENTORY OF AREAS AND FACILITIES

The park classifications address function, intended service areas, uses, resource availability, design characteristics, preferred locations and community-wide spatial requirements. Park standards that are unique to the community exist (or should exist) so that adequate park and open space land can be provided.

The San Marcos Horizons' plan identified several parks, recreation and cultural resources goals and also identified and classified the existing parks according to size and use. The Park Classifications and size provided in the San Marcos Horizons are as follows (no service radius or acreage per 1000 population were provided):

Regional Parks	over 10 acres in size
Community Parks	generally less than 10 acres in size
Neighborhood Parks	generally less than 5 acres in size

The Community Facilities Plan in the San Marcos Horizons also gave descriptions for each type of park, and included the type of facilities and services they should provide. According to the San Marcos Horizons, the Regional Parks provide facilities for all of San Marcos and the surrounding area. The Community Parks provide facilities for all of San Marcos' residents and the Neighborhood Parks provide facilities for specific residential neighborhoods.

In their recommendation, the San Marcos Parks and Recreation Advisory Board amplified the descriptions for each classification of park and its facilities, and provided two additional classifications. The classification of parks and their facilities are described as follows:

Neighborhood Parks provide specialized facilities to serve residential neighborhoods. Separate areas can accommodate “intense” recreational activities such as field games, court games, play apparatus areas, picnicking, etc. Neighborhood parks should be easily accessible to the areas they serve without causing the users to cross high traffic streets that do not have appropriate controlled crossings. The service area is considered to be a radius of service within comfortable walking distance (approximately ½ mile). In order to insure “neighborhood” use, infrastructure such as restroom facilities, group shelters and parking lots should NOT be considered.

Community Parks provide diverse environmental areas such as bodies of water, dense tree cover, and/or other natural features. Athletic complexes and large swimming pools can be located in this type of park. Community parks may include areas of natural quality for use in walking, viewing, contemplation, and picnicking. These parks may also combine the uses recommended for Neighborhood Parks and should be easily accessible. Community type parks should include infrastructure such as restroom facilities, group shelters and parking lots to facilitate accessibility and extended use for citizens from various parts of the service area.

The service area is generally the entire “community” where the park is located and is not necessarily limited by high traffic streets with or without appropriate controlled crossings.

Regional Parks provide large areas with diverse qualities for outdoor recreation. Activities and uses may include wildlife habitat and conservation, swimming, picnicking, hiking, fishing, boating, camping, trails, and concentrated athletic activities and facilities. These parks may also combine the uses recommended for Neighborhood Parks and Community Parks. The intent of Regional Parks is to provide large areas for recreation accessible to the entire service region. Facilities, such as concession sales, concession rides (train, boat, etc.), eating establishments, or even lodging facilities that assist in prolonging visitor stay in San Marcos may be incorporated into this category of parks.

Greenspace is an added classification not included in the San Marcos Horizons. This category can include land that is environmentally sensitive, has unique environmental qualities, or has a unique character that needs to be preserved. Due to the uniqueness of these types of tracts, they should be acquired as available with little or no regard to service area, size and population service area. Most of the land use within this category will be reserved for conservation and/or passive recreation. However, active recreational uses, where appropriate and necessary, should not be excluded.

To identify, select and eventually acquire additional greenspace, a “Project Selection Criteria and Checklist.” was adopted by the Greenspace Planning Committee and is included as follows:

In order to be considered for purchase, a proposed property MUST meet ALL of the following three (3) criteria:

1. *The protection of this property is consistent with the policies of the San Marcos Horizons (City Master Plan).*
2. *The property has natural, scenic, historic, or agricultural value.*
3. *The property is located within the San Marcos City limits or ETJ.*

If the property considered meets ALL of the three (3) criteria points given above, then in order to further qualify for selection the property MUST meet two (2) or more of the PUBLIC BENEFIT LIST items and at least one (1) of the FEASIBILITY LIST items.

The PUBLIC BENEFIT LIST items are as follows (a minimum of two required):

1. *The property provides connection to other open protected or open space lands.*
2. *The property promotes responsible watershed and floodplain management.*
3. *The property is important for the movement of wildlife between habitat and/or for the conservation of native vegetation.*
4. *The property provides protection for the Edwards Aquifer.*
5. *The property presents an opportunity to partner with other agencies and organizations, both public and private.*
6. *The property helps balance urban development with natural areas and helps define the form of the community.*
7. *The property has the potential to offer alternative non-motorized routes for the movement of people.*
8. *The property provides opportunity for equal access for traditionally under-represented groups.*
9. *The property promotes public health and safety.*
10. *The property creates and enhances the aesthetics/scenery and quality of life that define the community.*
11. *The property can contribute to the conservation of listed species or species of concern.*
12. *The conservation of this property offers economic benefits to the community.*
13. *The property provides appropriate recreational or educational opportunities.*

The FEASIBILITY LIST items are as follows (a minimum of one required):

1. *The property could likely be protected or acquired with reasonable effort in relation to the property's conservation value.*
2. *It is likely that adjacent properties could be connected/protected.*
3. *The property is accessible to the general public.*
4. *Grant or matching funds may be available to facilitate acquisition.*
5. *Lack of immediate action precludes future protection or acquisition.*

6. *The property would require minimal funds for restoration, development, and/or maintenance because it is in a relatively natural state.*
7. *A mechanism and/or funds are in place for on-going maintenance.*
8. *The property could be easily acquired through development agreements.*

The "Project Selection Criteria and Checklist" is hereby incorporated into this Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan to be used in the selection and acquisition of Greenspace.

Special Use Lands is another classification added to those included in the San Marcos Horizons. This classification may include all unique parcels of land that do not fall into any other category. This classification may also include parcels of land which can be used to complete, connect and/or complement the citywide park and recreation system, and may also include unused dedicated streets and alleys that serve these functions.

Using the park classifications listed above, members of Gil Engineering Associates, Inc. and the City of San Marcos Planning and Development Services staff performed an inventory of all the existing accessible and inaccessible parks, and available Special Use lands. Accessible parkland includes lands used for active recreation (such as playgrounds, ball fields, etc.) or for passive recreation (such as hiking trails, picnic areas and other low impact uses). Currently undeveloped parkland that is planned for development in the near future is also included as accessible land. Inaccessible parkland includes lands that are undeveloped and are generally not accessible to the public, such as conservation areas. All of the parks and available lands were subsequently classified using the recommended Parks Classification System with acreage derived from the City of San Marcos Geographic Information System (GIS).

The current existing Neighborhood park acreage totals 21.4 acres and includes the following:

NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS			
Map Location	Park Name or Identification	Accessible	Acres
Figure E1	Jaycees Park	yes	2.8
Figure E4	Victory Gardens Park	yes	0.6
Figure E5	HEB Park	yes	0.9
Figure E14	Veteran's Park	yes	6.3
Figure E16	Swift Memorial Park	yes	0.3
Figure E28	Franklin Square Park	yes	3.4
Figure E29	Willow Springs Park ^a	yes	4.0
Figure E17	Hills of Hays Park ^a	yes	3.1
Neighborhood Parks Total			21.4

^a unofficial name

The current existing Community park acreage totals 110.8 acres and includes the following: (the acreage is derived from mapping information):

COMMUNITY PARKS			
Map Designation	Park Name or Identification	Accessible	Acres
Figure E2	Children's Park ^{a,b}	yes	7.1
Figure E2	Rio Vista Park ^{a,b}	yes	20.1
Figure E3	Dunbar Park ^b	yes	7.3 ^c
Figure E7	City Park ^a	yes	18.4
Figure E9	San Marcos Plaza ^a	yes	4.8
Figure E10	Veramendi Park ^a	yes	3.8
Figure E11	Bicentennial Park ^a	yes	3.9
Figure E12	SM Wildlife Habitat ^a	yes	10.4
Figure E12	William/Eleanor Crook Park ^a	yes	5.8
Figure E13	Ramon Lucio Park ^a	yes	22.0
Figure E18	Alameda Park	yes	7.2
Available Community Parks Total			110.8

^a These parks also serve as Regional Parks due to their unique attraction in the region by being located along the San Marcos River Corridor.

^b Due to their proximity to residential areas, these parks also serve as neighborhood parks.

^c Acreage has been estimated from planimetric mapping since exact boundaries have not been put into City of San Marcos GIS

The current existing Regional park acreage totals 45.7 acres and includes the following:

REGIONAL PARKS			
Map Designation	Park Name or Identification	Accessible	Acres
Figure E19	Gary Sports Complex	yes	42.3
Figure E25	Veteran's Plaza (aka Farmers' Market)	yes	3.4
Available Regional Parks Total			45.7

Community Parks serving as Regional Parks are NOT included

The parks designated as ^a in the Community Park list serve as Regional Parks due to their unique attraction, location and accessibility in the region.

The current existing Greenspace acreage totals 523.2 acres and includes the following:

GREENSPACE			
Map Designation	Park Name or Identification	Accessible	Acres
Figure E1	Lancaster Greenbelt	no	0.9
Figure E1	Castle Forest Greenbelt	no	2.2
Figure E22	Sessoms Greenspace	no	5.3
Figure E23	Prospect Greenspace	yes	9.0
Figure E24	Schulle Canyon Greenspace	yes	21.0
Figure E26	Wonder World Greenspace ^a	yes	453.8
Figure E27	Willow Creek Greenspace ^a	no	31.0
Available Greenspace Total			523.2

^a unofficial name

The current existing Special Use Lands acreage totals 91.2 acres and includes the following:

SPECIAL USE LANDS			
Map Designation	Park Name or Identification	Accessible	Acres
Figure E8	Memorial Park	yes	31.2
Figure E21	"Old Treatment Plant" Site	no	20.0
Figure E20	"New Treatment Plant" Site	no	40.0
Available Special Use Lands Total			91.2

The City of San Marcos' estimated 2002 population is 40,514. The current total parkland is 792.3 acres (which includes inaccessible and special use lands). The current accessible parkland is 692.9 acres. Therefore, the existing total parkland is approximately 19.56 acres per 1000 population, while accessible parkland is approximately 17.10 acres per 1000 population.

The inventory of existing facilities within the parks and available land by categories, using the recommended Parks Classification System, are as follows:

NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

	ACRES	RESTROOMS	PARKING	PLAYGROUND	HIKE & BIKE TRAILS	SWIMMING POOL	TENNIS COURTS	SOCCER COMPLEX	BASKETBALL COURT	SOFTBALL COMPLEX	L.L. BASEBALL COMPLEX	PAVILION	BAR-B-QUE GRILLS	PICNIC TABLES	GAZEBO	FOOTBALL FIELDS	RIVER ACCESS	CANOE LAUNCH	VOLLEYBALL COURT	RECREATION HALL	DUNBAR CENTER	FISH HATCHERY BLDG.	ACTIVITY CENTER	CHARLES COOK HOUSE	INTERPRETIVE CENTER	UNDEVELOPED	OFF-LEASH DOG AREA	PARK RANGER OFFICE
JAYCEES PARK 2108 Lancaster Street	3.5			X					X				X	X														
VICTORY GARDENS PARK 300 Roosevelt Street	0.3		X	X					X																			
H.E.B. PARK 801 Patton Street	1.0		X	X									X	X														
VETERANS PARK 320 Mariposa Street	1.3		X	X					X				X	X														
SWIFT MEMORIAL PARK 200 Monterrey Street	0.3			X					X					X														
FRANKLIN SQUARE PARK 1800 block of North Bishop St.	3.4			X																								
WILLOW SPRINGS PARK 1500 block of IH35 South	3.4			X																								
HILLS OF HAYS PARK 1209 Crystal River Parkway	2.9			X					X				X	X														

COMMUNITY PARKS

	ACRES	RESTROOMS	PARKING	PLAYGROUND	HIKE & BIKE TRAILS	SWIMMING POOL	TENNIS COURTS	SOCCER COMPLEX	BASKETBALL COURT	SOFTBALL COMPLEX	L.L. BASEBALL COMPLEX	PAVILION	BAR-B-QUE GRILLS	PICNIC TABLES	GAZEBO	FOOTBALL FIELDS	RIVER ACCESS	CANOE LAUNCH	VOLLEYBALL COURT	RECREATION HALL	DUNBAR CENTER	FISH HATCHERY BLDG.	ACTIVITY CENTER	CHARLES COCK HOUSE	INTERPRETIVE CENTER	UNDEVELOPED	OFF LEASH DOG AREA	PARK RANGER OFFICE
CHILDREN'S PARK 205 South C.M. Allen Parkway	5.8	X	X	X	X							X	X	X														
RIO VISTA PARK 555 Cheatham Street	14.0	X	X		X	X	X		X			X	X	X			X	X	X									X
DUNBAR PARK 801 MLK Drive	7.3		X	X					X				X	X							X							
CITY PARK 170 Bobcat Drive	7.8	X	X	X	X				X				X	X		X	X	X	X	X								
SAN MARCOS PLAZA 206 North C.M. Allen Parkway	5.1		X		X																X						X	
VERAMENDI PARK 400 East Hopkins	1.2		X		X									X	X									X				
BICENTENNIAL PARK 209 South C.M. Allen Parkway	2.9		X		X								X	X			X											
SM WILDLIFE HABITAT 700 Cheatham Street	8.8				X												X											
William/Eleanor CROOK PARK 430 Riverside Drive	5.8	X	X		X								X	X											X			
RAMON LUCIO PARK 601 South C.M. Allen Parkway	22.0		X		X						X	X	X	X			X											
ALAMEDA PARK 301 River Ridge Parkway	7.4		X				X		X																			

REGIONAL PARKS

	ACRES	RESTROOMS	PARKING	PLAYGROUND	HIKE & BIKE TRAILS	SWIMMING POOL	TENNIS COURTS	SOCCER COMPLEX	BASKETBALL COURT	SOFTBALL COMPLEX	L.L. BASEBALL COMPLEX	PAVILION	BAR-B-QUE GRILLS	PICNIC TABLES	GAZEBO	FOOTBALL FIELDS	RIVER ACCESS	CANOE LAUNCH	VOLLEYBALL COURT	RECREATION HALL	DUNBAR CENTER	FISH HATCHERY BLDG.	ACTIVITY CENTER	CHARLES COCK HOUSE	INTERPRETIVE CENTER	UNDEVELOPED	OFF LEASH DOG AREA	PARK RANGER OFFICE
GARY PARK 2600 Airport Highway 21	40.0	X	X					X		X																		
VETERAN'S PLAZA 400 block of East Hopkins St.	3.4																								X			

GREENSPACE

		ACRES	RESTROOMS	PARKING	PLAYGROUND	HIKE & BIKE TRAILS	SWIMMING POOL	TENNIS COURTS	SOCCER COMPLEX	BASKETBALL COURT	SOFTBALL COMPLEX	L.L. BASEBALL COMPLEX	PAVILION	BAR-B-QUE GRILLS	PICNIC TABLES	GAZEBO	FOOTBALL FIELDS	RIVER ACCESS	CANOE LAUNCH	VOLLEYBALL COURT	RECREATION HALL	DUNBAR CENTER	FISH HATCHERY BLDG.	ACTIVITY CENTER	CHARLES COCK HOUSE	INTERPRETIVE CENTER	UNDEVELOPED	OFF-LEASH DOG AREA	PARK RANGER OFFICE
LANCASTER GREENBELT 2108 Lancaster St.	2.6																									X			
CASTLE FOREST GREENBELT 700 block of Craddock Ave.	2.9																									X			
SESSOMS GREENSPACE 915 Chesnut St.	5.0																									X			
PROSPECT GREENSPACE 1412 Prospect St.	9.0																									X			
SCHULLE CANYON GREENSPACE 1420 Alamo St.	21.0																									X			
WONDER WORLD GREENSPACE Southwest of Prospect Greenspace	127																									X			
WILLOW CREEK GREENSPACE 100 block of Colleen St.	31.0																									X			

SPECIAL USE LANDS

	ACRES	RESTROOMS	PARKING	PLAYGROUND	HIKE & BIKE TRAILS	SWIMMING POOL	TENNIS COURTS	SOCCER COMPLEX	BASKETBALL COURT	SOFTBALL COMPLEX	L.L. BASEBALL COMPLEX	PAVILION	BAR-B-QUE GRILLS	PICNIC TABLES	GAZEBO	FOOTBALL FIELDS	RIVER ACCESS	CANOE LAUNCH	VOLLEYBALL COURT	RECREATION HALL	DUNBAR CENTER	FISH HATCHERY BLDG.	ACTIVITY CENTER	CHARLES COCK HOUSE	INTERPRETIVE CENTER	UNDEVELOPED	OFF-LEASH DOG AREA	PARK RANGER OFFICE
MEMORIAL PARK 625 East Hopkins	13.0		X		X																		X				X	
"OLD TREATMENT PLANT" SITE 1300 block of IH-35 North	20.0																									X		
"NEW TREATMENT PLANT" SITE 750 River Rd.	40.0																									X		

STATED GOALS, POLICIES and OBJECTIVES

GOALS

The “Natural and Cultural Resources” goals (taken from pages 4-7 of the San Marcos Horizons) of the San Marcos Horizons and this Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan include protection of the San Marcos and Blanco Rivers, protection of the Edwards Aquifer, the protection and control of unique natural resources found within the city, and coordination of arts and cultural activities. The “Community Facility” goals (taken from pages 4-10 of the San Marcos Horizons) of the San Marcos Horizons and this Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan include planning “sufficient park space to meet the recreational needs of the community as it continues to grow.”

A high priority of this Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan is to improve and renovate the existing available parks and utilize all suitable available open spaces. All objectives identified are to include considerations for improved accessibility, aesthetics, and security as well as the preservation of existing natural, cultural and historical resources.

Another priority of the City of San Marcos is to complete development and adoption the San Marcos River Habitat Conservation Plan. The San Marcos River Habitat Conservation Plan is being developed jointly with Southwest Texas State University and is to be a comprehensive plan calling for the integration of environmental concerns with the recreational interests along the San Marcos River. With five (5) listed species thriving in

the San Marcos River, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has consistently denied permission to proceed with necessary improvements and repairs for recreational access to the San Marcos River. The San Marcos River Habitat Conservation Plan, when completed, will balance the environmental concerns with the currently “unrestricted” recreational uses of the San Marcos River.

Other priorities include “Joint Use” facilities developed jointly by the City of San Marcos and other governmental entities in the area. Inclusion of private organizations and associations, such as service clubs (Kiwanis, Lions, Rotary, etc.) and little league - softball and/or soccer associations, should also be drawn into the planning effort to avoid duplication of services and to provide them with the necessary facilities and/or space needs to serve the public.

POLICIES

The San Marcos Horizons Chapter 4 entitled “San Marcos Tomorrow” lists several Community Facilities Plan Policies to be implemented. The following list of policies dealing with parks (taken from pages 4-68 of the San Marcos Horizons) and cultural resources (taken from pages 4-73 of the San Marcos Horizons) has already been adopted by the City of San Marcos and is now included in this Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan.

Policy CF-1.1: The City shall prepare and adopt a Parks and Open Space Plan to determine the recreational needs of the community, future facility

requirements, maintenance, and future land needs and adopt the plan as an element to the Master Plan.

Policy CF-1.2: The City shall evaluate present and future parks and recreation facilities to avoid unnecessary duplication and provide for the coordinated development of a parks system, especially along the San Marcos and Blanco rivers.

Policy CF-1.3: The City shall provide a balance in recreation facilities to serve the varied interests of the population.

Policy CF-1.4: The City shall provide parks that reflect the preferences of residents for specific recreation activities and the population characteristics of the area to be served by the park or recreation facility.

Policy CF-1.5: The City shall acquire land along the San Marcos River, Blanco River and creeks to develop as parks and greenbelts.

Policy CF-1.6: The City shall develop nature trails and interpretive signage along the San Marcos River and tributary creeks.

Policy CF-1.7: The City shall locate parks at sites where adjacent land uses are compatible, where the use of surrounding property will not be diminished, and where accessible by all means of transportation.

Policy CF-1.8: The City shall develop neighborhood parks at those locations within walking distance of any section of a neighborhood and where no major arterials must be crossed. Regional and community parks, including baseball and softball diamonds and soccer fields, shall be located adjacent to major arterials and shall be buffered if adjacent to residential areas.

Policy CF-1.9: The City shall prohibit the dedication of parkland that is unsuitable for the development of a park.

Policy CF-1.10: The City shall locate recreational facilities on those portions of the site where grading, drainage, and utility construction is minimum and only slight modifications of the topography will be necessary to complete construction.

Policy CF-1.11: The City shall continue to expand the park system through the development of neighborhood parks.

Policy CF-1.12: The City shall develop criteria to assure that open space for neighborhood parks is secured at predevelopment costs and preserved in advance of neighborhood development.

Policy CF-1.13: (and CF-6.3) The City shall encourage, promote, and facilitate art and related types of festivals throughout the park system.

Policy CF-1.14: The City shall protect the area surrounding all caves and sinkholes.

Policy CF-6.2: The City shall develop a Cultural Arts Center.

Policy CF-6.3 (See Community Facilities Plan Park Policy CF-1.13 above)

Policy CF-6.4 The City shall preserve archeological and historical landmarks as appropriate through local, state, and federal ordinances and laws and through public purchase of important sites.

Policy CF-6.5 The City shall increase the number of prehistoric and historic landmarks in San Marcos and to maintain the existing landmarks with a higher level of exposure to the public.

Policy CF-6.6 The City shall establish an education program for cultural resources at all levels.

The protection of existing caves and sinkholes and acquisition of environmentally sensitive land is provided through the Greenspace and Special Lands categories recommended by this Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan.

OBJECTIVES

This Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan recommends a coordinated development of the parks systems along the San Marcos River, the Blanco River and their tributaries by acquiring any river front and creek front property as it becomes available or when development plans in these corridors are submitted to the City of San Marcos through the subdivision and development process.

This Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan further recommends that changes be made to the current subdivision ordinance to provide necessary parkland in proportion to the number of residents being attracted by a development rather than as a percentage of the land being developed. Developments of low residential density would not be required to provide as much land as an equal sized development of higher density. Changes to the subdivision ordinance should also include descriptions and elements of “suitable” parkland in order to preclude obtaining unsuitable or unusable land.

Through various public hearings made to solicit citizen input for incorporation into this Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan, the citizens placed a high priority on an integrated Hike and Bike Trail system which utilizes mostly off-street, and where not possible on-street, bike paths and lanes to connect and interconnect the various neighborhoods with the downtown and business areas, parks and recreational areas, and the schools and the University.

Other high priority requests made at the various public hearings for incorporation into this Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan include a BMX track, skateboard and roller blade parks, regional and neighborhood pools, neighborhood recreation centers with neighborhood recreation programs, and a regional arts / cultural center.

The City of San Marcos’ quality of life is very closely related to the unique natural areas found within its jurisdiction. The San Marcos Tomorrow Vision Statement makes several

observations regarding the enhancement of San Marcos' "great natural beauty, rich architectural heritage, small town charm"; the protection of the "unique environmental setting" including the Edwards Aquifer, the San Marcos Springs, the San Marcos River and other natural resources. The San Marcos Tomorrow Citizens Goals enumerate the major goals for San Marcos. The Citizens Goals dealing with Natural and Cultural Resources, Community Growth and Land Use and Community Facilities, suggest that the City of San Marcos "plan sufficient park space to meet the recreational needs of the community as it continues to grow." Park facilities should meet a variety of recreational needs and should include both neighborhood parks as well as community wide facilities." The above stated goals are hereby included as a part of this document to further tie the San Marcos Horizons with this Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan.

The ever-growing population in the City of San Marcos creates a strong need to acquire additional parkland through various methods, which should include:

- 1) use of excess City of San Marcos owned land;
- 2) outright purchase of land utilizing the City's Greenspace Acquisition Fund, grants available for parkland acquisition or other sources;
- 3) joint use with other entities such as San Marcos CISD, Texas Parks and Wildlife, Southwest Texas State University, Hays County and private corporations owning large tracts of land;
- 4) dedication through subdivision regulations;
- 5) donations of land for parks or greenspace;

It is recommended by this Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan that 50.0 acres of parkland per 1000 population be set as a minimum goal for the City of San Marcos, to be achieved through the various methods of parkland acquisition listed above.

One way to keep pace with the ever-increasing parkland needs is by dedication through subdivision regulations. The subdivision regulations could contain a provision for a given amount of parkland to be provided based on the number of residents to be generated by the subdivision. Estimated population densities for various types of residential developments may also be included as a part of the regulations. Appropriateness of the parkland being contemplated for dedication should also be included to preclude obtaining the type of land the current subdivision ordinance has sometimes provided for in the past years. Definitions which require a minimum parcel size, describe the acceptable parcel shape by providing a ratio of width to depth, and define the maximum topographic slope allowed or allowed area percentages in various slope categories (for handicapped accessibility) should be included in the new subdivision regulations. Descriptions for proper access and minimum roadway frontage of dedicated parkland should also be included as a part of the subdivision regulations. The dedication of unaltered or unchannelized 100-year floodplain or floodway should be encouraged. Provisions for reduction of required dedicated land where private recreational amenity areas are provided may be included in the subdivision regulations. Where “on-site” parkland is unsuitable or unavailable, the collection of fees in-lieu of parkland dedication could be used.

Citizens of San Marcos should be aware that additional parks, recreation and open space lands would require additional maintenance effort and its related costs. Fees for some recreational opportunities may become necessary due to the increasing cost of operations, maintenance and needs for expanded services and facilities. Fees for recreational opportunities are contrary to the public perception that government traditionally provides “free” recreation. Fees then should be appropriate to eliminate the thought of “double taxation.” This Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan recommends that, where fees are necessary to continue providing the recreational opportunities, a higher fee be set for non-resident use to mitigate and/or eliminate any subsidies by City of San Marcos residents.

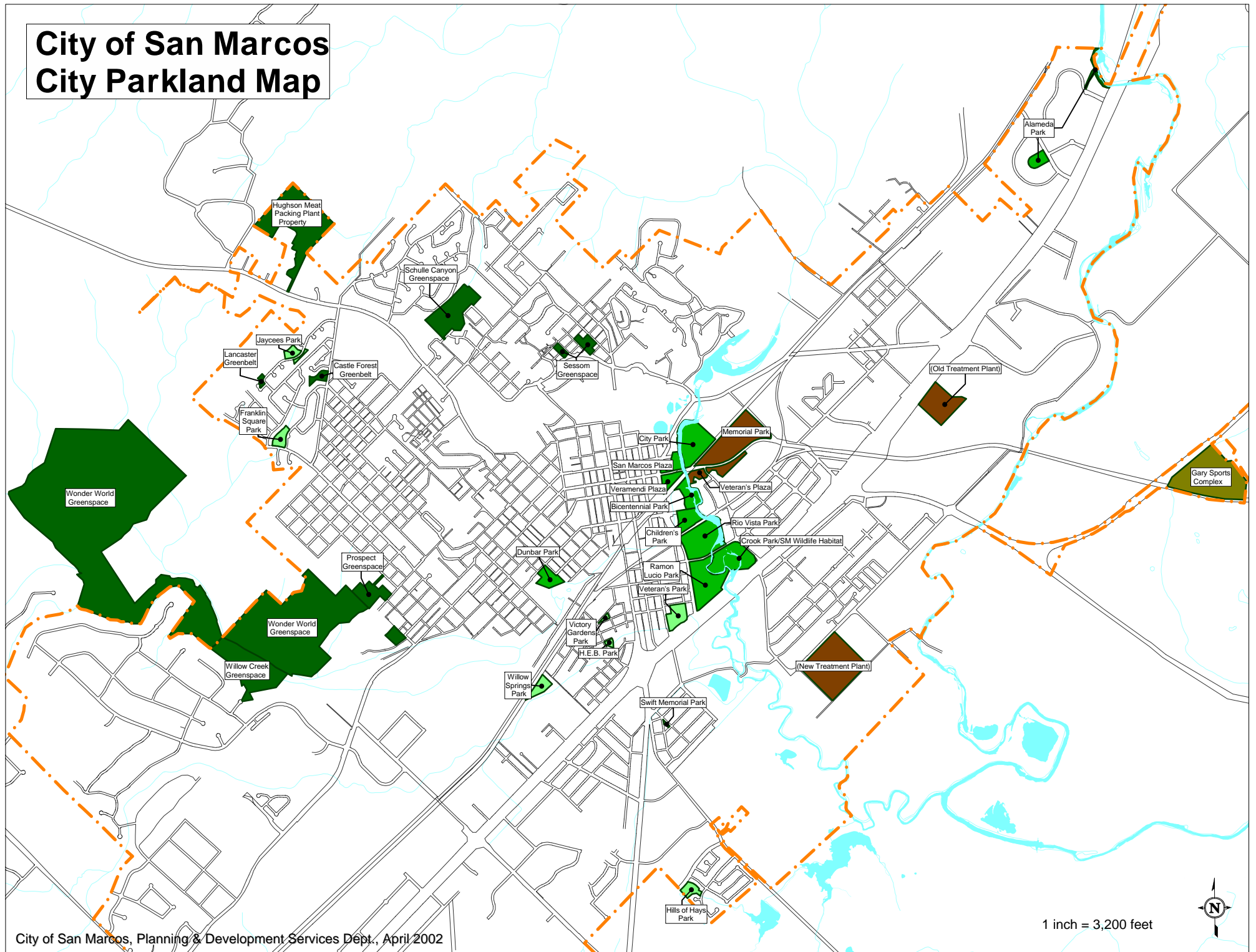
PRIORITIZATION OF NEEDS

This Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan recommends a 10-year action plan with ordered priorities, time line for accomplishment and funding sources as follows:

Priority	Action	Time Line	Funding Sources
1	Acquisition of Parkland and Greenspace	Ongoing from year one to year 10	City Greenspace Fund Grants Donations Parkland Dedication Bonds
2	Trails and related amenities	Ongoing from year one to year 10	Grants Donations General Fund In-kind Services
3	Neighborhood and/or Regional Swimming Pools	Ongoing from year one to year 10	Grants Donations Bonds In-kind Services
4	Athletic Fields	Ongoing from year one to year 10	Grants Donations Bonds In-kind Services
5	Cultural Arts Center	Ongoing from year one to year 10	Grants Donations Bonds In-kind Services
6	Neighborhood Recreation Centers	Ongoing from year one to year 10	Grants Bonds In-kind Services
7	Playgrounds	Ongoing from year one to year 10	Grants Donations Parkland Dedication Bonds In-kind Services
8	Inline/Skate/Skateboard Park or Parks	Ongoing from year one to year 10	Grants General Fund In-kind Services

Site specific plans, in agreement with the policies set forth in this Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan, for individual park site development will be prepared as needs are determined and when funding for such development is established and/or made available. Population characteristics of service area and resident preferences will be considered in the planning of the related facilities.

City of San Marcos City Parkland Map



City of San Marcos Neighborhood Park Service Areas

